

July 18, 1960

Dr. Fred L. Whipple, Director  
Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory  
60 Garden Street  
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Whipple:

At a recent meeting of the Space Science Board, Dr. Friedman mentioned the work you are doing on the development of a vidicon telescope for astronomical observations in the ultraviolet. An ultraviolet sensitive vidicon camera would be of very great use to our own studies on instrumentation for the detection of planetary life. The wave length that would be of the greatest interest is 2600 Å; as a practical compromise we are content with 2537.

Dr. Friedman mentioned that you have inspired some work at Westinghouse on the development of a suitable camera tube. I would be very grateful to you if you could tell me the status of this development so that we may possibly be able to take advantage of it. We have a preliminary grant from NASA to look into the ultraviolet microscope and hope in due season to catalyze an engineering contract to an appropriate organization in this area. Meanwhile, it might save considerable time and effort if we could be informed of parallel constructive efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

WHIPPLE, F.L.